reason NIPC's growth policy emphasizes incentives for balanced growth rather than restrictions on locational preferences expressed in the marketplace.

To this end, NIPC growth strategies include:

- Encouraging development in existing communities served by public transportation, including commuter rail. This policy encourages use of existing infrastructure to avoid piecemeal extension of services.
- Encouraging development in areas served by existing infrastructure and contiguous with existing development. This policy discourages development which leapfrogs into agricultural land.
- Protecting flood plains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas from development. This policy encourages the preservation and protection of sensitive lands within built-up, developing and rural areas of the region.

Development of the Project Corridor is consistent with NIPC development strategies. First, the corridor is highly developed with communities. In 1990, 41 percent of the land area of the Project Corridor was within the boundary of a municipal government. This was significantly higher than the 27 percent municipal land coverage within Will County. The overall population density of Will County in 1990 was 172 per square kilometer (444 per square mile) versus 500 per square kilometer (1,120 per square mile) for the Project Corridor. Due to the high population density of the Project Corridor relative to other parts of the county, the Project Corridor is served by existing infrastructure including two commuter rail lines serving the corridor, a third terminating just to the west, and a fourth proposed along existing tracks adjacent to the southeast portion of the Project Corridor. Therefore, Project Corridor development is consistent with encouraging development within existing communities and within areas served by public transportation, including commuter rail.

Second, 1,300 to 1,550 square kilometers (500 to 600 square miles) of land region wide will be needed for development resulting from population growth between 1990 and 2020. The Project Corridor represents one of the last areas open for development within a 48 kilometer (30 mile) radius of the Chicago central area. Total vacant land, including the smallest parcels, within 48 kilometers (30 miles) of downtown Chicago amounts to 297 square kilometers (115 square miles), of which 30 percent exists south of I-55 and within the Project Corridor (ACG, 2000). Therefore, development within the area is consistent with encouraging development contiguous with existing development and in keeping the metro area compact by focusing development close to the urban core.

Third, all lands within the Project Corridor are under the jurisdiction of land use plans of county and municipal governments. These plans place high priority on protecting sensitive resources and designate for protection flood plains, wetlands and other sensitive areas within the Project Corridor. Therefore, Project Corridor development is and will continue to be regulated in a manner consistent with protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

Overall, continued focused development within the Project Corridor would be consistent with NIPC growth strategies. As discussed above, the Tollroad/Freeway Alternative being the highest level facility would provide the best access to the Project Corridor among the

Build Alternatives and would most effectively focus growth within the Project Corridor in conformance with NIPC growth policies.

To conclude, the planning staff of Will County and municipal governments of the Project Corridor ranked the Tollroad/Freeway Alternative as most consistent with county and local land use plans. The Tollroad/Freeway Alternative was also selected by Project Corridor elected officials as most consistent with municipal and county land use goals and objectives. In addition, the Tollroad/Freeway Alternative best conforms to regional development strategies and plans prepared by NIPC and CATS.

3.4.3 Improve Regional Mobility

Regional mobility, the third of the four principal needs for which the Alternatives were evaluated, addressed the need to improve mobility for two types of trips: (1) non-local trips passing through the Project Corridor and (2) local trips originating within the Project Corridor and traveling to points elsewhere within the region and beyond.

Travel Times

Regional mobility was measured using CATS year 2020, 7-9am peak travel times. The project Build Alternatives were ranked based on their improvement to regional travel time over the 2020 No-Action.

Regional travel time improvement was measured by the total number of traffic analysis zones (TAZs) showing a reduction in travel time for each Alternative. A grid of TAZs covers the region. These TAZs are the basic geographic unit by which CATS measures traffic and travel time.

Exhibits 3-10, 3-11 and 3-12 map the TAZ's showing improved travel times as a result of implementing each Build Alternative from three points of origin. Two of the three origin points represent existing interchanges within the Study Area at I-55/I-294 and I-55/I-80. These locations represent route decision points for regional travel. The third origin point represents the location where I-80 enters the Study Area. This point was selected because no interchanges exist between I-80 and another interstate within the Study Area. However, I-80 at this location is primarily used for regional travel (CATS, 1998).

Regional travel time saving was quantified by totaling the TAZs where travel time would be reduced as a result of implementing the project Alternative. Table 3-6 presents the total number of TAZ's showing a reduction in travel time by Build Alternative as compared with the No-Action Alternative. Performance varied among the three points of origin. However, all points demonstrate the value of the Transportation System Improvement in improving north/south travel. The analysis identified the Tollroad/Freeway Alternative as achieving the greatest reduction in regional travel time followed in rank order by the Lemont Bypass and the Enhanced Arterial.

Table 3-6
Number of TAZ's with Travel Time Improvement for the following ranges

Alternative	12 – 25 %	> 25%	Total
Tollroad/Freeway Alternative	330	102	432
Lemont Bypass Alternative	167	10	177
Enhanced Arterial Alternative	19	0	19